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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mobile Community Watch Program Underway in Canal Winchester

Media invited to attend ceremony on December 4

CANAL WINCHESTER – A mobile community watch program recently kicked off in Canal Winchester after the first group of village residents graduated from training class with the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office. The purpose of this program, which is made possible through local volunteers, is to deter crime as well as raise awareness and residential safety in the community.

“Our community watch program is an effective way to increase the safety of our neighborhoods at no cost to the village,” said Canal Winchester Mayor, Michael Ebert. “We appreciate the dedication of the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office to this program as well as the commitment of our resident volunteers.”

On December 4 the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office will set aside a community watch vehicle for use in Canal Winchester by the program's citizen observers. Members of the media are invited to attend a ceremony where the vehicle will be dedicated and citizen volunteers will be recognized. Media will be given the opportunity for personal interviews with Mayor Michael Ebert, Fairfield County Sheriff Dave Phalen, Sergeant Collins, community watch program coordinator for the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office, and Canal Winchester mobile community watch volunteers. Details follow:

Date/Time: Thursday, December 4 at 1:30 p.m.

Location: Village Municipal Building, 36 S. High Street, Canal Winchester
(parking available behind building)

Agenda: Brief Remarks
Introduction and Recognition of Volunteers
Dedication of Vehicle
Personal Interviews

Each citizen volunteer undergoes a background check as well as 40 hours of training that consists of a mix of classroom and on the street instruction before graduating from the program. Each volunteer is supervised by a sworn law enforcement liaison officer who monitors the performance of patrols under his or her jurisdiction.

Once they begin observing, volunteers are encouraged to patrol their own neighborhoods because they know if something is out of the ordinary and people find them approachable. Typical volunteer duties include patrolling designated areas and reporting suspicious occurrences, routine house checks and traffic direction. To date, volunteers have already donated hundreds of hours for preventative patrols and special events.

The Village of Canal Winchester has partnered with the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office to bring the mobile community watch program to Canal Winchester. Fairfield County began administering the program in areas within its jurisdiction in mid-2007, after Sheriff Dave Phalen learned about a community in Arizona that was reporting a 50 percent drop in crime in neighborhoods where their community watch program was active. There are several successful community watch programs across the United States, and Fairfield County has incorporated components of many of these into its program.

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